

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: J.P. NARAYAN APPEALS TO INDIAN SECURITY FORCES

SUMMARY: J.P. NARAYAN HAS BEEN STEPPING UP HIS APPEALS TO INDIAN SECURITY FORCE PERSONNEL TO RESIST ATTEMPTS BY MRS. GANDHI TO ASSUME DICTATORIAL POWERS, URGING THEM TO PREPARE FOR THE DAY OF A FUTURE, NON-VIOLENT "TOTAL REVOLUTION." THE PRIME MINISTER, CONGRESS LEADERS AND THE CPI ARE COUNTER-CHAR- GING THAT NARAYAN'S APPEALS ARE EXACERBATING THE "CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE" HIS MOVEMENT HAS CREATED IN THE CONTRY. THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT AND EVEN THE LARGELY CIRCULATED, MODERATE PRESS, WHICH IS GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC TO NARAYAN, APPEAR CONCERNED BY NARAYAN'S NEW EMPHASIS, IT IS STILL LIKELY THAT MRS. GANDHI WILL ALLOW HIM (BUT NOT NECESSARILY HIS SUPPORTERS) TO TALK ON RATHER THAN TO ARREST HIM. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE INAUGURATING HIS MOVEMENT ONE YEAR AGO, J.P. NARAYAN HAS PERIODICALLY USED PUBLIC PLATFORMS TO CALL FOR THE SYMPATHY OF THE POLICE AND PARA-MILITARY UNITS. IN 1974, THESE APPEALS GENERALLY REMAINED LIMITED TO ENCOURAGING POLICE PERSONNEL TO REJECT ORDERS CALLING FOR "USING FORCE AGAINST PEACEFUL AGITAT- TIONS" SPONSORED BY HIS MOVEMENT.

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2. TWO MONTHS AGO NARAYAN SHIFTED HIS MAIN LINE OF ATTACK AWAY FROM CORRUPTION AND ELECTORAL REFORM AND TO WHAT HE DESCRIBES AS MRS. GANDHI'S GROWING AUTHORITARIANISM. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE HAS INCREASED THE FREQUENCY OF HIS APPEALS TO INDIAN SECURITY FORCES, WIDENING THEM TO INCLUDE THE ARMED FORCES AS WELL AS POLICE AND PARA-MILITARY UNITS. HE HAS ALSO UPPED THE INTENSITY OF HIS MESSAGE BY DIRECTLY CALLING ON INDIAN SECURITY FORCES TO GUARD AGAINST POSSIBLE ATTEMPTS BY MRS. GANDHI TO ASSUME THE TYPE OF DICTATORIAL POWERS THAT SHEIKH MUJIB HAS SECURED FOR HIMSELF IN BANGLADESH, AND TO PREPARE TO JOIN WITH THE CURRENT OF "TOTAL REVOLUTION" AT SOME FUTURE DATE SHOULD AUTHORITARIANISM PROCEED UNCHECKED.

3. ILLUSTRATIVELY, IN A FEBRUARY 3 SPEECH IN THE EASTERN UTTAR PRADESH CITY OF GORAKHPUR, NARAYAN ASKED POLICE NOT TO CARRY OUT "IMMORAL" ORDERS OF THE GOVERNMENT BECAUSE THEY WERE SERVANTS OF THE PEOPLE AND NOT THE PRIME MINISTER OR GOVERNMENT. ADDRESSING A FEBRUARY 19 STUDENT RALLY IN PATNA, HE URGED ARMED FORCES AS WELL AS POLICE AND PARA-MILITARY PERSONNEL NOT TO OBEY "ANTI-PEOPLE" ORDERS, REMINDING THEM THAT THEIR "LOYALTY" WAS TO "YOUR COUNTRY, THE COUNTRY'S FLAG AND THE COUNTRY'S CONSTITUTION." IN A GENERAL ATTACK ON THE PRIME MINISTER AND HER POLICIES AT BHUBANESHWAR ON MARCH 31, NARAYAN ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD NOT HESITATE "TO GIVE A CALL" TO THE ARMED FORCES AND THE POLICE TO REVOLT AGAINST UNJUST AND UNDEMOCRATIC ORDERS OF CORRUPT MINISTERS AND ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD THE APPROPRIATE TIME ARRIVE.

4. MRS. GANDHI, CONGRESS LEADERS AND THE CPI HAVE RESPONDED TO NARAYAN'S APPEALS BY LINKING THEM WITH A GROWING "CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE" IN THE COUNTRY AND THE RECENT ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS ON THE LIVES OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS. THE WIDELY-CIRCULATED, MODERATE PRESS, WHICH HAS BEEN GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC TO NARAYAN'S MOVEMENT, HAS REBUKED HIM FOR COMPROMISING HIS NON-VIOLENT, GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY. EVEN THE LARGE, PRO-J.P. DAILY INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIALIZED THAT "NO ORGANIZED SOCIETY CAN SUBSIST BY RELEGATING TO THE FORCES OF INTERNAL LAW AND ORDER AND EXTERNAL SECURITY THE POWER TO DECIDE BETWEEN WHAT IS JUST AND UNJUST," AND WARNED THAT "AN INSURRECTION BY THE ARMED FORCES CAN CREATE A SITUATION WHICH NEITHER J.P. NOR ANYBODY WILL BE ABLE TO CONTROL," LEADING TO "THE EXTINCTION OF DEMOCRACY IN THE COUNTRY."

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SEVERAL PRO J.P. MP'S AND EDITORS, WE HAVE SPOKEN TO, ARE EMBARRASSED AT JP'S EDGING TOWARD CALLS FOR "MUTINY." THEY PRO-FESS NOT TO HAVE A CLEAR IDEA WHAT HE IS LEADING TOWARD EXCEPT PERHAPS AN IMPLIED THREAT THAT IF MRS. GANDHI DEFIES THE CONSTITUTION (BY POSTPONING ELECTIONS OR ASSUMING NEW POWER), SHE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO COUNT ON THE POLICE AND ARMY.

5. THE CONCERNS OVER J.P.'S REMARKS ARE PROBABLY REINFORCED BY

STILL FRESH MEMORIES OF THE BLOODY AND DISRUPTIVE 1973 STATE POLICE REVOLT IN UTTAR PRADESH, THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE GREAT BULK OF INDIAN POLICE AND PARA-MILITARY PERSONNEL COME FROM THE HINDI-SPEAKING BELT IN NORTH INDIA, WHERE NARAYAN'S MOVEMENT HAS BEEN MOST EFFECTIVE, AND THE LOW PAY AND DIFFICULT LIVING CONDITIONS, INCLUDING PERIODIC, LONG PERIODS OF FAMILY SEPARATION, THAT THE SIZEABLE POLICE AND PARA-MILITARY UNITS ASSIGNED TO CONTAIN NARAYAN'S MOVEMENT MUST FACE.

6. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS RESIGNED TO ALLOWING NARAYAN TO CONTINUE TO PLUCK THIS SENSITIVE CHORD, FOR THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE IS TO ARREST HIM - A STEP MRS. GANDHI IS STILL UNWILLING TO TAKE (SEE PAA 11 NEW DELHI 15147 - 1974). THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY TRUE FOR THE TESTY "COMMITTED" PRESS CONTROLLED BY POLITICAL PARTIES LIKE THE JANA SANGH WHICH ARE EAGERLY SUPPORTING NARAYAN'S MOVEMENT. THEIR VULNERABILITY TO GOI REACTION IS ILLUSTRATED BY THEIR LOW KEY HANDLING OF NARAYAN'S APPEALS.

7. COMMENT: WE AND DAO HAVE REPORTED ON AN INCREASE IN CORRUPTION IN THE SECURITY FORCES INCLUDING AT THE SENIOR OFFICER LEVELS. HOWEVER, WE HAVE LITTLE IF ANY DIRECT EVIDENCE OF THE DEGREE OF JP'S SUPPORT IN THE SECURITY SERVICES AND DOUBT WHETHER IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE A CALL TO DISOBEY ORDERS WOULD MEET WITH MUCH IF ANY RESPONSE.
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